

NSC BRIEFING

28 April 1955

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SITUATION IN SAIGON, -

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I. [REDACTED] shells started

landing presidential palace and
grounds at 1:15 Thursday afternoon
(Saigon time). [2.15 AM out time]

A. After two had hit in the
grounds and one on the palace
Diem telephoned Ely, said he
was ordering counterfire.

B. Ely, whose quarters only a
few blocks from palace,
said he had heard no firing.

C. Just then another shell hit
apparently ending telephone
conversation.]

D. By three o'clock, at least
eleven rounds of counterfire
had been heard from the
vicinity of the palace and

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smoke was seen rising from

the vicinity of Binh Xuyen

HQ in Cholon.

II. Press reports ^{indicate} ~~from Paris say~~ a cease-fire has been arranged but this is denied by government spokesmen in Saigon.

A. Diem said to have ordered all-out war against Binh Xuyen.

B. Press reports "several hundred" casualties.

III. Just before firing started, ^{PA} ~~our~~ sources reported Binh Xuyen determined to force a showdown and planning to attack.

A. ~~Morale of Binh Xuyen officers reported high because they convinced of French support.~~

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IV. Although Binh Xuyen started firing, Diem's order of 26 April removing police from Binh Xuyen control forced the issue.

- A. Some 400 of 700 police functionaries had reported to new HQ on 27 April.
- B. Binh Xuyen apparently also getting worried because Bao Dai had not yet acted as they anticipated.
- C. Bao Dai told US Emb Paris he had made irrevocable commitments and would have to act on them momentarily.
- D. He pressed for US views on his plan to solve crisis.

V. In showdown fight, Vietnamese army could drive Binh Xuyen out of Saigon unless stopped by French.

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A. [REDACTED] morale

of Vietnamese army battalion
commanders and troops of army
high.

B. Ammunition reported short,

however [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] a French offer to turn
over a munitions depot was
refused because it was con-
ditional on French troops
staying in depot.

C. Considerable rise in anti-

French feeling noted in Saigon.

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D. [REDACTED] growing

belief that crisis is a fight
between Diem and French, which
makes choosing sides easy.

E. Diem's new police chief says
there will be a "donnybrook"
if French depose Diem.

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Diem

intends form new cabinet
and announce same tomorrow
(tonight our time).

Had to wait until

① Police chief replaced

② officials returned
from Bandung